Lesson 36 - Junk Foods: A Case Study Of Garlic And Onions

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1. Introduction

Even though garlic or onions are not processed or altered, they are regarded as junk foods because they do not contribute to the welfare of the body when ingested. On the contrary, they contribute to disease by adding toxins to the body. As you will learn from this lesson, there are no health benefits to reap from ingesting either of these foods. They both contain toxic irritants which result in much harm when included in the diet and should, therefore, never be consumed. The importance of this statement will become evident upon completion of this lesson.

2. History of Garlic

Garlic is a hardy perennial bulb, native to the Mediterranean region of Africa and Europe. Its history dates back many centuries, and it was long used for rubbing the newborn infant's lips, and as a protection against disease by tying it around the throat.

The sun, the Cross, and garlic are the only three things reputed to scare away vampires. Both the ancient Egyptians and Greeks regarded garlic as having supernatural powers.

During the 17th century, garlic was credited with protecting many European households from the ravages of the Great Plague. In New England during Colonial times, garlic cloves were bound to the feet of smallpox victims. Cloves were also placed in the shoes of whooping cough sufferers. For intestinal worms, raw garlic juice or milk which had been boiled with garlic was often drunk. A clove or two of garlic pounded with honey and taken two or three nights successively, is good for rheumatism, herbalist lore tells us.

During World War I, garlic was used as an antiseptic in hospitals. Pads of sphagnum moss were sterilized, saturated with water-diluted garlic juice, wrapped in thin cotton, and applied as bandages to open wounds.

3. The Garlic Plant

The botanical name for garlic is Allium sativum. This hardy bulbous plant is a member of the lily family, which also includes leeks, chives, onions, and shallots. Like the onion, the edible bulb of the plant grows beneath the ground. This compound bulb is made up of several small sections or bulblets called "cloves" which are encased in thin papery envelopes. The cloves are eaten and also used for planting. Farmers plant the crop in early spring and the bulbs mature early in the fall. The bulbs are "cured" by drying in the field. Workers then braid the tops or remove them, and the garlic is ready for market. The bulbs are either sold whole or ground into powder. The juice of the garlic bulbs may also be extracted and sold.

3.1 Garlic's Pungent Flavor

Garlic is most often used to season foods because of its pungent flavor. A substance in garlic, called allicin, is responsible for its flavor and odor.

3.2 An Antibacterial Agent

Allicin is an antibacterial agent and an extremely irritating liquid. It has a drug-like property which, like any other drug, destroys life. Antibacterial agents kill bacteria. Do we wish to kill bacteria? Certainly not! Bacteria are essential components to life and without them life would not continue.

As students of Life Science, you know that bacteria do not produce disease but perform a very important function. These useful organisms come into action when the cell has finished its life cycle to decompose the dead cell and help to eliminate it from the body. They also act to clean up toxic material which the body eliminates. This is why they are often seen during a disease process.

Bacterial action takes place in all disease phenomena because these are processes requiring the breaking down or disintegration of accumulated refuse and toxic matter within the body, which the system is endeavoring to throw off. But to assume, as many medical scientists do, that merely because the bacteria are present and active in all disease phenomena, that they are therefore the cause of these same diseases, is just as wrong as it would be to assume that because bacteria are present and active in the decomposition process connected with all dead organic matter, they are the cause of the death of the organic matter in question. Bacteria are part of the results of the disease, not its cause.

It does not make sense to ingest a food which would interfere with or destroy this important function within our body.

3.3 An Anthelmintic and Rubefacient

According to Stedman's Medical Dictionary, the volatile oil from the bulb or entire plant of garlic is used as an anthelmintic and rubefacient. These are big words, but with big effects. We will take them one at a time.

An anthelmintic is an agent that destroys or expels intestinal worms. Now if one suspects that he or she has intestinal worms, one had better look very closely at his or her diet and lifestyle. And then run (don't walk) to their nearest Hygienic practitioner and go on a long fast! Taking an anthelmintic drug would not be the answer in any case as we cannot promote health by ingesting deadly poisons.

Any agent which is so poisonous as to cause immediate death to any other living organism should *never* be consumed. If this volatile oil, which is part of the garlic plant, is so powerful as to result in death of internal parasites and bacteria does it not stand to reason that it would also have a serious detrimental effect on the entire organism?

When any food is ingested, it goes through the same process of digestion and assimulation. Its components are broken down, absorbed through the intestinal lumen and eventually find their way into the bloodstream and lymph. These components are then carried throughout the body and the nutrients are used by the cells as needed. Nonusable components are, of course, rejected and eliminated. If these components are deadly poisons, much harm can be done as they circulate throughout the system and possibly combine with other chemicals within the body or are stored in the tissues.

A rubefacient is an agent which results in reddening of the skin. In other words, as soon as the extracted oil from the garlic is applied to the skin, a redness will result. What does this mean? Redness indicates inflammation and the body's response to an irritating substance. The body attempts to isolate this invading substance so that it does not enter the bloodstream and create further problems for the body to deal with.

We may assume that if this reaction occurs when this oil is applied topically, extreme irritation must result when it comes in contact with the more delicate lining of the gastrointestinal tract.

We know that the body regards garlic as a poison and attempts to eliminate it as soon as possible. Anyone knows that when they ingest garlic (even a very minute quantity) the odor will remain on the breath and even the skin will smell of garlic. The body is eliminating this poison through the lungs and skin, which seem to be the most rapid and efficient routes.

4. Claimed Health Benefits

Many authors claim that garlic is a "miracle food" and recommend it to 'cure' all types of ailments. Paavo Airola says, "garlic is, indeed, a tremendously nutritious health food and a miraculous healing plant. It can truthfully be called 'the king of the vegetable kingdom.'" In the book, *Herbal Medicine*, Dian Dincin Buchman says, "If garlic weren't so cheap, we would treasure it as if it were pure gold. Garlic draws out pain, helps in resisting a cold, is an aid in combating hypertension, is a remarkable vermifuge (releases worms from the system), quiets the body, tranquilizes, can be directly applied to warts to whittle them down, can be used (diluted in lots of water) to irrigate the colon to control amoebic dysentery, and can help treat mild cases of mononucleosis."

In other words, garlic is a powerful drug which results in the suppression of symptoms. But causes have not been removed and no healing has occurred. We have, in fact, halted the healing process when we suppress the symptoms.

4.1 Reduced Blood Pressure

Paavo Airola says that, "In my own clinical practice, I have treated many patients with high blood pressure; in most cases the blood pressure was reduced 20-30 mm. in one week by taking large amounts of garlic and garlic preparations."

This was a very dramatic drop in the blood pressure of this patient. What would cause this pressure to drop so quickly? Was it the 'miracle' preparation of garlic? No, garlic has no ability to act just as no drug has the property to act upon the body. But the body does respond to food and toxins which enter. Furthermore, the garlic does not have a mind of its own to treat specific symptoms. It goes through the same digestive process as other foods and enters the circulation. The body detects it as a poison and marshals all of its forces to deal with that poison. Meanwhile, other bodily functions are slowed or depressed while this energy is being directed toward the emergency at hand. If there were healing in the

heart, the body would have to stop this process in order to deal with the poison. Continued consumption of large amounts of garlic would have a continued depressing effect on the heart and all the bodily organs and a state of enervation or exhaustion would occur. It may be especially enervating on the heart as opposed to another organ in persons who have high blood pressure because this may be their weakest organ. One should not palliate symptoms but remove the cause of disease.

4.2 Prevents Plague Formation In Arteries

It is claimed that garlic prevents the formation of plaque in the arteries and thus helps prevent the development of artheriosclerosis and heart disease. Paavo Airola describes one experiment where one-fourth pound of butter at one time was given to five healthy volunteers. Three hours after the volunteers had eaten the butter, their cholesterol levels had risen from an average of 221.4 to 237.4. Later, the same volunteers received the same amount of butter along with the juice of 50 grams of garlic. This time, the cholesterol levels, instead of rising, went down from 228.7 to 212.7 in three hours. Now that really was a "miracle," or was it?

Now we must recognize that no one consumes one-fourth pound of butter in one sitting. The cholesterol levels in the blood would naturally rise after such a meal. But this is where the cholesterol should be after the meal—in the blood. Excess is then eliminated (as much as possible). That is, under ordinary circumstances, the excess would be eliminated when the body is not so drastically overloaded.

When the volunteers were given garlic with the butter, blood cholesterol levels were reduced. Where did the fat go? Did it disappear? No, it is still in the body, but it is in the tissues and has not remained in the blood. Allicin makes the cells and tissues more permeable and substances enter which would not ordinarily enter.

Garlic also interferes with certain physiological processes. It is known to interfere with the synthesis or breakdown of lipids in the liver. This is why the cholesterol level of those ingesting garlic over a period of time is lower. However, the body synthesizes cholesterol in the liver for a reason and it is needed for certain cellular functions. Any agent which interferes with any normal bodily function is health-destroying and not health-promoting.

The body has its own way of controlling the amount of cholesterol which is in the plasma. Cholesterol synthesis, as well as the hepatic mechanism for removing this steroid from the plasma, are both stimulated by thyroxine. Thyroxine is the hormone which is produced by the thyroid gland. This hormone plays a role in many metabolic activities besides control of cholesterol in the plasma as will be explained later. The output of thyroxine is controlled directly by thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) secreted by the anterior pituitary. These mechanisms are part of the body's homeostatic mechanisms of checks and balances to keep all bodily actions and reactions in harmony and in balance.

A substance which is present in garlic as well as onions is mustard oil. Mustard oil is metabolically converted to thiocyanate in the body. This substance contributes to the formation of goiter by decreasing thyroxine synthesis in the thyroid gland. Thus, when garlic is eaten, thyroxine is decreased and therefore cholesterol synthesis is reduced.

Garlic then results in the interference of a very important homeostatic mechanism. The impairment of this mechanism does not have just one effect but many. Remember, the body works as a unit and never as separate independent parts.

People think that they have discovered a wonder drug or a miracle food just because one symptom has vanished—in this case, elevated serum cholesterol. In reality, it is a grave deception—an illusion.

Quite often one hears that excessive lipids are the major causes of heart disease. This is not quite the truth. The real cause is the overloading of toxins created through the over-consumption of fats in the diet and in general, an unnatural diet.

4.3 Garlic Cures Anemia

It has been claimed that garlic extract has a beneficial effect in the treatment of anemia. This is far from being the truth. In fact, the use of garlic actually results in anemia. The red blood cells are actually destroyed by the allicin in garlic.

4.4 A Cure For Arthritis

It has been claimed that garlic exhibits some anti-inflammatory activity and is therefore effective in the treatment of arthritis.

One cannot get well by suppressing disease. We must remove the cause of disease and provide the conditions for health. Then the body will heal. Garlic undoubtedly does have some anti-inflammatory drug effects. However, this is not a good aspect but an adverse one. Inflammation should never be suppressed as it is a healing response without which even a mild infection could become fatal. To suppress this response by an anti-inflammatory agent is to suppress healing. To more fully understand the consequences of suppressing inflammation, we will take a closer look at this process.

4.5 Inflammation

As mentioned, inflammation is a healing response within the body. Whenever there is tissue damage as a result of disease or injury, the damaged tissue cells produce histamines. These histamines cause changes in tiny blood vessels, which in turn release fluids into the injured area. Local blood flow increases, bringing blood cells whose specialty is destroying foreign microbes to the area. Along with these disease-preventing cells comes fibrinogen, which causes clotting. The clotting results in what is called "walling off," that is, Nature literally builds a partition between the infected area and the rest of your body. The effect is to prevent the infection from spreading. This partition, or wall, stops body fluids from moving outside the infected area, and these fluids build up in the area, causing the characteristic swelling of inflammation.

Before inflammation can arise, there must exist an exciting cause in the form of some obstruction or of some agent inimical to health and life. In this light, we see inflammation as a healing process.

The body does not suppress the growth and multiplication of disease germs until the morbid matter (toxins) on which they subsist has been decomposed and consumed, and until the inflammatory processes have run their course. The use of serums, antitoxins or anti-inflammatory agents given to suppress germ activity and the process of inflammation before it has run its natural course will lay the foundation for chronic destructive disease.

4.6 Garlic—A Body Detoxifier

How could any agent which is so poisonous and irritating be a detoxifier? It does, in fact, add toxins to the body. It is claimed that it detoxifies by stimulating the liver, the nervous system and the circulation. This stimulating effect is in reality the body's response to an unwanted agent and the body's efforts to eliminate it as quickly as possible. The ingestion of this food as a stimulant will, according to the Law of Duel Effects, eventually depress these organs. Only much harm can come from this practice.

4.7 An Anticoagulant Agent

One of the so-called benefits of garlic is claimed to be its anti-coagulant factor. In other words, it inhibits blood clot formation. In truth, this is not a benefit but an undesirable factor. As we all know, if our blood did not clot, we would bleed to death from a slight wound.

In certain disease conditions, a thrombosis (blood clot) occurs in the blood vessels. But if given the proper conditions, the body is equipped to handle this also. Nature has its own anticlotting factors.

Heparin occurs naturally in the body tissues. It reduces the ability of blood to clot by blocking the change of prothrombin to thrombin. Thrombin is the enzyme responsible for the formation of fibrin which is the structural ingredient in blood clots.

If a blood clot occurs with a blood vessel, a system within the body called the fibrinolytic system digests the fibrin clots into a number of soluble fragments.

4.8 Pesticidal Properties

The following are just some of the pesticidal properties of garlic:

1. Causes 100% mortality in 5 species of mosquito larvae when used in such small doses as 200 parts per million.
2. Planting rows of garlic plants between rows of vegetables or flowers which are specifically vulnerable to insect attack, such as rose, tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage, etc. will prevent insect infestations and protect plants.
3. When used on dogs, garlic will kill ticks within 20-30 minutes.

Would you put a pesticide on your salad? We had better leave the garlic in the garden!

5. Onions

The onion is one of the oldest vegetables known to man, having been cultivated from the most remote period, as references in Sanskrit and Hebrew literature indicate. It is represented on Egyptian monuments. An inscription on the Great Pyramid states that sixteen hundred talents had been paid for onions for the workmen who built the Pyramids. There were certain religious sects who maintained that onions were impure and forbade their disciples and priests to eat them.

5.1 The Plants

Onions were raised in America as early as 1750. The leading onion-growing states include California, Idaho, Michigan, New York, Oregon and Texas. But onions are grown in many other states and Canadian provinces. Mexico, Italy, and Spain are also noted for their onions.

The onion plant is a biennial (a plant that lives for two years). The upper part of the plant is a set of leaves growing inside each other. The lower part of the leaves become very thick. The flowers are small and white, and grow in round clusters. The bulbs are enclosed in a thin papery covering made up of dried outer leaves. The onion plant has a few shallow roots.

The different kinds of onions have many sizes, colors, and shapes. People who trade in onions classify them as American (strong onions) and foreign (mild onions). The strong type includes the Yellow Globe types and the flatter Ebenezer type.

The onion is not particularly high in vitamins or in energy value.

5.2 A Toxic Substance

The substance in onions which gives them their characteristic odor and flavor is mustard oil, a volatile oil which is highly toxic. Its vapors are so irritating that they cause profuse watering of the eyes just by being in contact with the vapors for a few seconds. This oil, if applied directly to the skin, would cause

extreme redness and blistering.

Anyone can testify to the fact that after they have eaten onions, even if it was only a small amount, the onion smell stays in their breath for a long time afterwards. The body eliminates much of this toxic oil through the breath as it attempts to get rid of this poison from the system.

5.3 Contributes to Goiter

As mentioned earlier, the mustard oil is metabolized in the body to thiocyanate. Ordinarily small amounts of thiocyanate are eliminated. But in large amounts this substance is highly toxic and results in disease. Thiocyanates are goitogenic. They contribute to the formation of a goiter by decreasing thyroxine synthesis in the thyroid gland. Thyroxine performs many important functions in the body.

One important function that thyroxine has in the body is to increase the rate at which cells burn their fuel, glucose. It also works in partnership with cortisol (a hormone of the adrenal glands) in defending the body against stress resulting from extreme cold. Thyroxine is also involved in other antistress responses. Emotional stress and severe hunger also provide an elevated thyroxine output. In general, thyroxine comes into play when there is an extra demand for energy. Thyroxine also increases the heart rate. When it is synthesized within the cells of the thyroid, this hormone becomes a part of a protein (thyro-globulin) until needed. When needed, a complex reaction involving the proteolysis (hydrolysis) of thyroglobulin and the synthesis of thyroxine takes place.

This is the point where the thiocyanate interferes with the synthesis of thyroxine. Apparently, the interference occurs with this protein but further research still has to be done in this area. At any rate, much harm can result.

5.4 Onions and Anemia

In *The Complete Book of Food and Nutrition*, J.I. Rodale relates a series of experiments concerning the adverse effects of eating onions. According to Rodale, Dr. M. Kaiser, of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, gorged (experimentally) on enough onions to bring himself down with an all-out case of anemia in a single week.

Experimenting with dogs, the same Illinois scientist first tried them out on the ordinary onion oil extract that is widely used in restaurants and homes for food-flavoring, and discovered that a daily dose of a mere quarter teaspoonful of this substance produced the disease in marked degree. Found to be too potent to try in a proportionate scale on humans, this extract should, they agreed, not even be used in extreme moderation in seasoning.

The next stage in the course of their study consisted simply of enlisting volunteer medical students to overeat the plain food, and in this stage Dr. Kaiser himself participated. Besides their regular diet, the group consumed over two pounds of cooked onions daily for 5 days. At the end of this time all showed typical anemia symptoms, dragging themselves around in an exhausted state and turning pale to their fingertips. On laboratory examination, the red cell count in their blood exhibited a drop of about a million, and the hemoglobin content was also starkly reduced. But this was only a slight anemia when compared with that of the dogs, which for 15 days had been fed comparable amounts of the pungent bulbs. In the animals both red cell count and hemoglobin had sunk to 50 percent below normal.

This destruction of the red blood cells and subsequent liberation and loss of hemoglobin has very grave consequences to the body's overall integrity. The red blood cells, along with the other constituents of the blood, perform many very important functions. Below is a list of just some of these duties:

1. It is the medium by which oxygen is transported from the lungs to the tissues.
2. Carbon Dioxide, a product of the metabolism of cells is transported from the tissues to the lungs.
3. Nutrient materials are absorbed from the intestine and carried to the tissues.
4. Many organic substances that represent breakdown products of metabolism are carried by the

blood to the kidneys for excretion.

5. Hormones, the secretions of ductless or endocrine glands, are distributed throughout the body by the bloodstream.
6. The blood flows from the deeper and warmer parts of the body to the extremities and tends to distribute heat more evenly to all parts of the body.
7. The blood plays an important part in maintaining acid-base balance of the tissues.
8. There is a constant relationship between blood volume and the fluid content of the tissues.
9. The ability of the blood to form a clot and so reduce bleeding has been of survival value to animals and man.
10. The blood performs an important part in cleaning up foreign matter and dead cells from the body.

We can thus see that by disturbing one thing in the body we disturb many functions. But these problems can be avoided simply by staying on a correct diet and avoiding such toxic foods as garlic and onions.

6. Claims Of Health Benefits

It has been claimed that onions 'cure' coughs, colds, flu, sinus ailments, bruises, hemorrhoids, and chilblains plus assorted other diseases.

As Hygienists, we know that this could not be true. Only the body can heal. The use of onions may suppress disease symptoms but this is certainly an undesirable effect as this results in suppressing our body's attempts to heal.

Poisons do not heal—poisons only poison. There are no health benefits in eating onions.

7. Are Onions And Garlic A Food?

In order for a food to be considered an acceptable part of our diet it must not contain harmful or toxic substances. It must not furnish the body with digestive and eliminative problems. Neither garlic nor onions qualify in this respect.

The food must be delicious. We should be able to eat it with relish. We can't really say we relish the strong flavors of garlic or onions. Just peeling onions is a job most people dread!

The food must be easy of digestion and assimilation. Does not qualify here!

The food must contain a rather broad range of nutrients and be fairly complete in their complements of nutrients. Both onions and garlic offer little food value.

We should be able to make a mono meal of the food if we desire. No one could make a complete mono meal of either garlic or onions or even consider doing so. Whereas, a mono meal of watermelon, mangoes, grapes, peaches, cherries, or oranges is very appealing.

The conclusion is undeniable that neither garlic nor onions is a true food and they both should be

excluded from our diet. I cannot really imagine that anyone would greatly miss these items as they are not really appealing and their after-effects (such as bad breath) are so disturbing. Do yourself a favor and eliminate garlic and onions and you will reap the benefits by increased health and vigor.

8. Questions & Answers

Would onions be all right to eat if they were cooked?

> Since mustard oil in the onions is a volatile substance, some of it will evaporate during the cooking process. However, enough will remain to make it a toxic substance. Furthermore, I do not recommend cooking as it alters or destroys most food constituents and contributes to toxins in the body. Try staying with an all raw food program and you will find that you will not require onions for seasoning.

I always heard that if you wear a clove of garlic on a string around your neck during the winter, it wards off colds. Any truth to this?

> No, it is just an 'old wives tale' which has been passed down through the generations.

Are the milder tasting onions less harmful than the stronger ones?

> They are somewhat better but still contain enough mustard oil to warrant keeping them off the diet.

Why do I always experience indigestion following a meal that contains either garlic or onions?

> All members of the onion family—onions, garlic, leeks, shallots, chives, etc.—as well as radishes and all other foods containing appreciable amounts of mustard oil—inhibit digestion. This is because they occasion irritation of the stomach and intestines.

Article #1: Are Garlic and Onions Helpful in Preventing Stroke?

A reader of the Health Crusader has submitted an article praising onions and garlic as useful in preventing stroke. He was sure we were right in our stand on garlic and onions but is not so sure now that he read the article that says we need these obnoxious plants to prevent stroke.

The article says "these smelly vegetables are beneficial in treating many ailments." Now two scientists (unnamed in the article) have isolated the compounds (also unnamed) in garlic and onions which prevent the clumping together (clotting) of blood cells that block circulation and cause strokes.

Of course we know the names of these substances in onions and garlic. They are allicin, a poison on the same order as digitalis (an extract from foxglove) and mustard oil, a highly volatile oil that goes through

cell membranes and gets into the cells with great ease. The body cannot digest either of these poisons nor make use of them. They go into the tissues and blood quite readily and cause havoc. The body violently objects to poisons and the eliminative and purifying organs are burdened with a big job. The kidneys, lungs and liver become injured. Their ability to get rid of poisons becomes impaired as they are abused and overworked.

In this article is a basic mistake, namely, the presumption that strokes must be prevented. Nothing is further from the truth. They must be caused! We must not consume disease-causing, sickness-promoting "foods" and drugs. We need to obtain plenty of rest, exercise, and fresh air. Healthy people don't get blood clots, and taking substances of any kind which contain poisons will not make up for wrong living and eating habits. It will only add to the body toxicity that caused the problems in the first place.

Let's not eat overly strong foods containing poisonous substances in the mistaken belief that we can prevent stroke or any other health problem. That which is not bound to happen doesn't have to be prevented or avoided. Vibrant health is normal and will exist unless disease is caused.

Article #2: Gorgeous, Glorious Garlic

Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. To us, a ripe red apple entices. To a tiger, a gory red carcass is enticing.

So, in seeing an article that sings the praises of garlic in the November, 1978 issue of Reader's Digest, I wonder what is at the heart of it. Magazines usually don't devote their space to something without a commercial angle unless there is an overriding reader interest. But let's presume this article is simply an effort to present a topic of general interest which they sincerely feel will benefit their readers.

When we get into the article we find that garlic is praised for about everything except its food value. In fact the windup is that garlic is a "flavoring agent," a condiment. But in between we find it is quite toxic (not by the tenor of the article but by some of its uses as an antibiotic and an insecticide). It was noted that its juice can be used as an antibiotic to kill a culture of bacteria in just minutes.

We organic gardeners have long known that we can protect our gardens well by planting garlic amongst some of the rows. Also, it is suggested that the juice of garlic can be used for killing mosquito larvae, aphids, houseflies, caterpillars, etc.

But we of life Science recommend that you not eat garlic because of its poisonous qualities. To be sure, the mustard oil of garlic is the sole ingredient for which it is recommended. And just as surely, it is a poisonous indigestible oil that plays havoc with the human constitution just as does the capsicum of hot peppers, the nicotine of tobacco, the solanine of the nightshade family or any of the myriad of other poisons of popularity referred to as herbs.

There will be a day when garlic and other plants bearing poisons will be recognized for what they are and shunned rather than praised.